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SECRET

9 NOVEMBER 1968

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT KY'S VIEWS CONCERNING THE STALEMATED PARIS TALKS AND THE GVN POSITION

1. ON 5 NOVEMBER 1968, VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY DISCUSSED HIS VIEWS CONCERNING THE CURRENT STALEMATE IN THE PARIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH A NUMBER OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE SENIOR OFFICERS. DURING THE CONVERSATION, KY INDICATED THAT HE AND PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU WERE NOW PRETTY MUCH IN ACCORD ON GVN POLICY. KY'S CONCERN LAY IN THE GVN'S ABILITY TO UNITE AND SHOW PROOF THAT IT WAS A TRULY INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN COUNTRY.

2. KY TOLD THE OFFICERS THAT THE PARIS TALKS WERE DEADLOCKED. HOWEVER, THE GVN SHOULD WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE U. S. ELECTIONS AND THEN, WITH THE NEW PRESIDENT-ELECT, OFFER A SOLUTION WHICH IS COMPLETELY VIETNAMESE AND NATIONALIST. POINT ONE SHOULD CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE AND AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO CONTROL THE TWO SIDES OF THE 17TH PARALLEL. IT WOULD ALSO REQUIRE A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF NOT ONLY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM SVN BUT THOSE OF THE ALLIED POWERS AS WELL. POINT TWO

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WOULD ENTAIL THE GVN DISCUSSING DIRECTLY WITH THE DRV THE ISSUE OF REUNIFICATION OF THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. POINT THREE WOULD RECOMMEND THE GVN TALK DIRECTLY WITH THE NLF ABOUT SVN INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

3. KY CONTINUED THAT THE DRV COULD NOT REFUSE TO ENTER INTO SUCH TALKS NOR COULD THE "MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROADERS" IN SVN FIND THE POLICY OBJECTIONABLE. INTERNATIONAL OPINION WOULD ALSO BE FAVORABLE, SEEING THE POLICY AS ONE OF GOOD WILL OFFERED BY A COUNTRY "WITH INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN" STATUS. KY NOTED THAT THE GVN'S WEAKNESS DERIVED FROM THE DRV'S BELIEF THAT SVN WAS THE LACKEY OF U.S. IMPERIALISTS.

4. KY REITERRATED THAT HE WAS NOT AFRAID TO TALK TO THE NLF NOR DID HE FEAR EVEN NGUYEN HUU THO'S BECOMING A GVN MINISTER. HOWEVER, HE WAS AFRAID THAT THE DRV WOULD CONTINUE TO INFILTRATE CADRES AND WEAPONS INTO SVN. KY AFFIRMED THAT INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES WERE NECESSARY TO PROTECT SVN IN THIS REGARD. KY ALSO SAID THAT IT SHOULD BE MADE EVIDENT THAT SVN REALLY WANTED A LASTING AND GUARANTEED PEACE. SVN WOULD HAVE TO RELY ON OTHER COUNTRIES TO GUARANTEE THE 17TH PARALLEL.

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5. KY SAID THAT HE WOULD PROMISE TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH THE DRV REGARDING VIETNAMESE REUNIFICATION. IN THIS WAY, "ALL" THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WOULD SEE THAT THE GVN WAS INDEPENDENT. CONSEQUENTLY, THE PEOPLE WOULD BACK THE GVN. A SHORT-RANGE EFFECT OF THIS POSITION WOULD BE TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE AT THE PARIS TALKS, AFTER ALL THE U. S. HAS ARRANGED TO DATE IN PARIS.

6. REFERRING TO DIRECT TALKS WITH THE DRV, KY STATED THAT PERHAPS THE U. S. WOULD NOT ACCEPT THIS, NOR WOULD THE RUSSIANS AGREE TO IT. HOWEVER, AVERRED KY, WITH THE TROOPS GONE, VIETNAM WOULD BE OUT FROM UNDER THE DOMINATION OF THE GREAT POWERS. KY FELT THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY OUT FOR SVN. "WE MUST BE INDEPENDENT," HE MAINTAINED.

7. KY NOTED HE HAD TOLD THIEU THAT THERE WERE NOW THREE THINGS TO BE DONE: REORGANIZE THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE IT MILITANT; PUT A HALT TO FACTIONALISM AND FAVORITISM WITHIN THE MILITARY; AND BRING THE PARTIES AND PEOPLE TOGETHER INTO AN ANTI-COMMUNIST POSITION.

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8. KY SUGGESTED THAT THE GVN USE DUONG VAN ("BIG") MINH. IN THE PAST THERE WAS SUSPICION OF "BIG" MINH FOR FEAR HE WOULD FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT, KY CLAIMED, BUT NOW MINH HAD SHOWN THAT HE WAS A NATIONALIST. IN ADDITION, THE PEOPLE WERE FOND OF HIM. HE WOULD HELP UNIFY THE PEOPLE AND THE MILITARY, KY OPINED.

9. KY FELT THAT THIEU WOULD BE FINISHED IF HE DID NOT DO THESE THINGS TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY. HE REMARKED THAT OVER THE YEARS, LACK OF UNITY HAD BROUGHT ON MANY GVN DEFEATS. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THERE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR UNITY.

10. KY TOLD THE OFFICERS THAT WHEN THE DRAFT COMMUNIQUE WAS FIRST PRESENTED, THERE WERE MANY ARGUMENTS LEADING NOWHERE. KY SAID THAT HE ASKED THIEU TO LOOK AT REALITY. THIEU HAD BEEN PRESENTED WITH A COMMUNIQUE WHICH HE DID NOT WANT TO SIGN. ONE OF THE POINTS TO WHICH THIEU OBJECTED WAS THE REFERENCE THAT THE EXPANDED TALKS WOULD BE A CONTINUATION OF THE EXPLORATORY TALKS. I NOTICED, SAID KY, THAT THIEU WAS OPPOSED TO HAVING THIS IN THE DRAFT RIGHT FROM THE START. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER, SAID KY, IF THE COMMUNIQUE HAD

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READ "THE FIRST MEETING" RATHER THAN "THE NEXT MEETING", TO INDICATE THAT THE TALKS WERE MOVING INTO A NEW PHASE. WHAT WE WERE TRYING TO SAY WAS "PRELIMINARY CONTACTS", I.E., TWO PHASES OR THAT NOTHING AS YET HAD BEEN DECIDED. THE AMERICANS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THIS. BY THIS TIME, BOTH SIDES, THE AMERICAN AMBASSADORS AND US, WERE BEAT PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. KY SAID HE OFFERED HIS PROPOSALS TO THE PRESIDENT AND FROM THAT DAY ON CHANGES WERE MADE. KY CONCLUDED THAT "AS OF RIGHT NOW, HE BELIEVES IN ME VERY MUCH."

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